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# Electric Vehicle Charging on Residential Distribution Systems: Impacts and Mitigations

**ANAMIKA DUBEY, (Student Member, IEEE), AND SURYA SANTOSO, (Fellow, IEEE)**

Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX 78712, USA

Corresponding author: S. Santoso (ssantoso@mail.utexas.edu)

**ABSTRACT** This paper aims to understand, identify, and mitigate the impacts of residential electric vehicle (EV) charging on distribution system voltages. A thorough literature review on the impacts of residential EV charging is presented, followed by a proposed method for evaluating the impacts of EV loads on the distribution system voltage quality. Practical solutions to mitigate EV load impacts are discussed as well, including infrastructural changes and indirect controlled charging with time-of-use (TOU) pricing. An optimal TOU schedule is also presented, with the aim of maximizing both customer and utility benefits. This paper also presents a discussion on implementing smart charging algorithms to directly control EV charging rates and EV charging starting times. Finally, a controlled charging algorithm is proposed to improve the voltage quality at the EV load locations while avoiding customer inconvenience. The proposed method significantly decreases the impacts of EV load charging on system peak load demand and feeder voltages.

**INDEX TERMS** Electric vehicle charging, TOU pricing, controlled charging, power quality, voltage quality, distribution system, dynamic programming.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The promise of clean and efficient transportation coupled with the advances in battery technologies and generous federal incentives are promoting transportation electrification [1]–[4]. In the near future, electric vehicles (EVs) are expected to dominate the vehicle market. However, the success of EV technology depends on the availability of EV charging stations. To meet this demand, utilities are installing EV charging stations at residential and commercial locations. A residential EV charging station in North America provides a 120V (Level-1) or a 240V (Level-2) voltage supply to the connected EV through either a normal wall outlet or a dedicated charging circuit. Commercial chargers are generally high-powered, fast AC/DC chargers and installed in heavy traffic corridors and at public charging stations. However, because commercial chargers are still in the primary stages of deployment, EV owners typically charge their EVs overnight at residential charging stations primarily using Level-2 chargers. Unfortunately, the increasing number of residential EV chargers may cause several challenges for the distribution system. Therefore, both a system level analysis of the impacts of EV integration on the residential distribution circuit and solutions to address their impacts are needed.

EV integration studies in the literature have primarily focused on evaluating the impacts of EV loads on

1) electricity generation adequacy [4]–[10], 2) transformer aging [10]–[14], and 3) distribution system power quality [10]–[28]. In section II, a short literature review of these three issues is presented. In short, it is speculated that if charging infrastructure is not planned properly, the widespread adoption of EVs over the distribution circuit can significantly increase the substation load demand. In turn, the generation capacity of the existing distribution grid may need to be expanded. Furthermore, the increased peak load demand due to EV load charging may overload service transformers, resulting in transformer overheating, thus deteriorating the transformer's life and increasing the economic burden on distribution utility companies. Finally, increased EV penetration may result in sustained secondary service under-voltage conditions, violation of under-voltage limits, and three-phase power supply unbalance, which would deteriorate the service voltage quality.

In the literature, several methods are proposed to mitigate the impacts of EV charging on the distribution grid. The mitigation strategies are primarily grouped into two categories. In the first approach, utilities indirectly control EV charging using Time-of-Use (TOU) pricing [29]–[36]. The decreased off-peak electricity rates in a TOU pricing scenario motivates EV owners to charge their vehicles during off-peak hours. This method significantly decreases the

peak load demand and mitigates transformer overloading and heating concerns. In the second approach, utilities directly control EV charging rates and charging start time using smart charging algorithms [15], [37]–[55]. To date, algorithms proposed to control EV load charging aim to achieve two objectives. One objective is to maximize utility benefits by shifting EV charging to off-peak load hours. The other objective is to maximize customer benefits by optimally charging EVs aiming to decrease the total electricity cost in a real-time electricity market. However, both smart charging methods have certain limitations. For example, by shifting the EV charging profile to off-peak hours, the first method ignores customer inconvenience. As for the other method, many utilities still do not use real-time electricity pricing for their residential customers, rendering the method inapplicable. Furthermore, none of the smart charging methods directly aim to decrease the impacts of EV charging on feeder voltages.

#### A. CONTRIBUTION

The objective of this paper is to identify, understand, and mitigate the impacts of EV load charging on a residential distribution circuit. A detailed literature review including EV charging impacts and their solutions is presented first. Next, an approach to evaluate the impacts of EV load on the distribution system is presented. Additionally, several mitigation schemes that address EV charging concerns are also discussed including infrastructural upgrades, indirect EV charging control using TOU pricing, and direct EV charging control using smart charging algorithms.

The proposed EV impact analysis approach identifies several factors that affect primary and secondary distribution voltage quality while EV loads are charging. These factors include EV load location, size, distribution, and percentage penetration. The impacts of EV charging are evaluated for both a typical North American (NA) and a typical European (EU) distribution circuit [28]. The EV charging impacts on both NA and EU distribution circuits are compared. The study concludes that EV load charging may increase the system peak load demand, result in service transformer overloading, and may cause unnecessary voltage drops in the secondary service voltages.

Given the impact of EV charging on transformer loading and service voltage quality, the paper suggests the following infrastructural upgrades to mitigate EV load concerns: increase the size of the service transformer and reconfigure the distribution circuit using an additional service transformer. However, because infrastructural upgrades require significant labor and cost, in order to mitigate EV load concerns the paper also presents both indirect and direct control algorithms for EV charging. The impact of indirectly controlling EV charging with TOU pricing is discussed first. Next, a method is proposed to identify an optimal time to begin off-peak rates in a TOU pricing scenario, while avoiding EV customer inconvenience. It is observed that the simultaneous charging of EV loads during off-peak hours under a TOU schedule may result in a second peak in the load demand

and unnecessary additional voltage drops. To address this concern, a smart charging algorithm is proposed to directly control EV charging rates and charging start time while minimizing the voltage variations at each EV load location. By minimizing voltage variations, the proposed algorithm shifts the EV load demand to off-peak load hours, thus mitigating loading concerns as well.

#### B. PAPER ORGANIZATION

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section II presents a literature review on evaluating and mitigating the impacts of EV charging on the utility distribution system. A short discussion on EV technology and charging standards is presented in Section III, followed by our approach to evaluating the impacts of EV charging on distribution voltage quality in section IV. Methods to mitigate EV load impacts by upgrading the infrastructure are detailed in Section V. The proposed methods of controlling EV charging, indirectly using TOU pricing and directly using smart charging algorithm, are presented in Sections VI and VII, respectively. Section VIII summarizes the findings and presents the conclusion.

### II. EVALUATING AND MITIGATING THE DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM IMPACTS OF EV CHARGING – A LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents a detailed literature review on the impacts and mitigation of EV charging on the distribution system. The impact analysis details the EV charging impacts on the existing distribution circuits' generation adequacy, transformer aging due to overloading, and distribution system power quality. Several mitigation schemes proposed in the literature, including indirect control using TOU rates and direct control using smart charging algorithms, are detailed next.

#### A. IMPACTS OF EV CHARGING ON DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

Growing EV charging infrastructure poses several challenges for the existing distribution system. These challenges have been thoroughly evaluated in the past few years. In the existing literature, EV impact analysis is primarily conducted to evaluate the effects of EVs on electricity generation adequacy, transformer aging, and distribution system power quality. It is speculated that EV charging during peak load hours may increase the peak load demand and necessitate generation capacity expansion. Additionally, increased EV load demand may overload substation and service transformers, thus deteriorating the transformers' life. Furthermore, EV charging may result in several power quality issues such as voltage drops, power unbalances, and voltage/current harmonics.

##### 1) EV LOAD IMPACTS ON ELECTRICITY GENERATION ADEQUACY

Several EV integration studies [4]–[10] have analyzed the existing and planned generation capacity to meet current and future EV demands. These studies conclude that if EVs are

charged during off-peak load hours, new power plants will not be required to meet EV charging demand. If vehicles' charging is controlled and shifted to off-peak hours, EV charging will not increase the system peak load demand and therefore will not affect power generation adequacy. However, without controlled charging, large-scale EV deployment could decrease supply adequacy, and, therefore, will necessitate the construction of additional power plants. Specifically, [11] concludes that, depending on the time and place of the vehicle additions, EV charging could require additional power generation or increase the utilization of existing capacity and possibly reduce the reserve margins. In these cases, generation reliability would be a serious concern.

## 2) EV LOAD IMPACTS ON TRANSFORMER AGING

Large-scale EV deployment is likely to cause problems in the distribution system such as increased load demand, increased system losses, and additional voltage drops [10]–[28]. The increased load demand due to EV loads can overload service transformers, deteriorate the transformers' life, and increase system losses. Furthermore, EV charging can create new load peaks exceeding the service transformer's rated capacity, thereby accelerating equipment aging [12]–[14]. Specifically, [12] characterizes the impacts of EV charger harmonics on distribution transformer's life. The analysis portrays a quadratic relationship between the transformer's life and the total harmonic distortion (THD) of the battery charger current. For a reasonable transformer life expectancy, it is suggested that the current THD should not exceed 25–30%. Similarly, [13] evaluates the impacts of EV charging on transformer capacity overloading and concludes that a time-controlled EV charging can successfully mitigate transformer overloading concerns. A separate study concludes that, depending on the charging condition, EV charging can both positively or negatively affect transformer aging [3]. For example, an increased peak load demand may decrease transformer life expectancy. However, if EVs are primarily charged during off-peak hours, a flatter load profile could reduce the daily expansion and contraction of the transformer, resulting in a positive effect on transformer's life.

## 3) EV LOAD IMPACT ON DISTRIBUTION POWER QUALITY

EV charging is also likely to cause power quality problems in the distribution circuit including, but not limited to, under-voltage conditions, power unbalances, and voltage and current harmonics. As the number of EVs increase, so does the electricity demand required to charge their batteries. An EV load charged by a Level-2 charger can almost double the peak load demand of the homeowner [23]. The increased load demand due to EVs leads to additional voltage drops in the secondary service voltages, thus affecting the service voltage quality.

Several studies have been conducted to evaluate the impacts of EV charging on distribution voltages.

The existing methods simulate multiple representative EV charging scenarios and project the potential impacts of EV charging using distribution circuit analysis tools. For example, [15] evaluates the impacts of the additional demand due to EV charging on system power losses and voltage deviations. To mitigate the effects of EV charging, the study recommends a controlled charging method. In [16], the impacts of quick EV charging on the power distribution system particularly on power system harmonics are evaluated and the maximum EV penetration level while avoiding serious harmonic impacts is determined. Furthermore, in [18], the impact of EV integration on power system loading and voltage profiles is evaluated and the benefits of several charging scenarios, such as dumb charging, timed charging, and controlled charging, on service voltage quality are quantified. Similarly, [19] investigates the effects of EV charging on distribution voltages, line drops, and system losses and [20] evaluates EV charging impacts on voltage limits, power quality, and power imbalance. In [21]–[24], several circuit parameters, both at local and global level affecting distribution voltages during EV charging are evaluated. Based on the analysis, it is concluded that that a large-scale EV deployment could violate recommended limits for secondary wire voltages and could cause voltage unbalance. Another study uses actual measurements and survey data to determine EV charging characteristics, including feeder load demand, EV charging starting time, battery state-of-charge (SOC), and proposes a stochastic approach to analyze the impacts of EV charging [26]. A Monte Carlo approach to evaluate the impacts of EV charging on feeder voltage quality, including under/over voltages and voltage imbalances, is proposed in [27]. Reference [28] presents a comparative analysis on the impacts of EV charging on typical NA and EU distribution circuits.

Since maintaining an appropriate voltage level for residential customers is of prime importance to utility companies, a detailed analysis of the impacts of EV charging on distribution voltages is required. In Sections III and IV, we present our approach to evaluating the voltage quality impacts of EV loads on residential customers. A short discussion on EV technologies and charging standards for both NA and EU distribution circuits is presented as well.

## B. TIME-OF-USE (TOU) PRICING TO MITIGATE EV LOAD IMPACTS

The EV impacts analysis concludes that EV load charging during peak load hours can lead to undesirable grid impacts, such as an increase in the peak load demand and under-voltage conditions, thus necessitating grid expansions and upgrades. Several studies have concluded that uncontrolled charging of EV loads can limit the percentage penetration of EV loads into the distribution grid [10]–[28]. To avoid EV charging during peak load hours, utility companies deploy a TOU pricing structure. In a TOU scheme, the electricity usages are rated differently during peak and off-peak hours (lower rate), which motivates the customers to utilize the

electricity generated during off-peak hours [30]–[32]. The schedule to begin peak and off-peak rates in a TOU scheme is referred to as a TOU schedule. In [32], the customer's response to time-varying rates for EV charging is investigated. The study aimed to understand the behavior and choices of EV customers to different EV tariff structures. The study concluded that EV customers were responsive to TOU prices and most of the EV owners programmed their vehicle to charge during the off-peak tariff periods. Therefore, TOU pricing can successfully stimulate EV charging during off-peak hours and flatten the load demand profile [30]–[32].

Implementing TOU pricing is a useful demand-side management scheme. However, if, while designing the TOU schedule, the total demand and load profile of the EV load is not taken into consideration, the effects of EV charging under a TOU schedule might get worse [33]–[35]. The reduced electricity rates during off-peak hours may result in simultaneous charging of multiple EV loads causing an even higher increase in peak load demand and thus larger additional voltage drops. To date, the implemented TOU schemes do not consider EV loads while setting up the TOU schedule. This calls for the development of an optimal TOU schedule that considers the EV load demand and thus minimizes the effects of EV load charging.

An optimized TOU schedule taking EV load demand into consideration is developed in [35]. The paper proposed an approach to minimize peak value and peak-valley difference of the feeder load demand. However, the proposed TOU structure in [35] does not take the convenience of EV owners into consideration. An optimal TOU schedule that benefits both utility companies and customers, while taking EV charging into consideration, is developed and presented in this paper [36]. The objective is to develop a practical approach for setting up a TOU schedule based on customer load demand, EV charging demand, and service transformer loading constraints. The selected time to begin off-peak rates in a TOU scheme should minimize the effects of EV charging on the secondary service voltages, while ensuring that EVs are fully charged by 7 am (worst case). Both grid and customer benefits can be simultaneously maximized in this way. The analysis suggests that the optimal time to begin off-peak rates is between 11 pm and 12 am [36].

### C. SMART CHARGING ALGORITHMS TO MITIGATE EV LOAD IMPACTS

The TOU pricing structure, which aims to minimize EV loading during peak load hours by shifting the EV demand to off-peak hours, is not an optimal solution for significantly higher levels of EV penetration. Under TOU pricing, the simultaneous charging of several EV loads can create a second peak in load demand during off-peak hours [33]. The second peak will essentially limit the number of EVs that can be included in the distribution circuit. It should be noted that even after implementing TOU rates, a significant amount of power system capacity remains underutilized. This is because in the TOU pricing scenario all EV loads begin

to charge simultaneously at the beginning of off-peak rates. The power system could be utilized more efficiently if the EV charging rate and charging start time are controlled to optimize a desired grid objective [37], [38]. The grid objective could include, but not be limited to, flattening the overall load shape profile, minimizing the charging cost, or minimizing power losses. Therefore, smart charging algorithms should be developed to accommodate higher percentages of EVs into the grid without causing negative impacts on the distribution feeders.

Given the potential benefits of the smart charging scheme, several articles [15], [39]–[55] have proposed algorithms to determine an EV schedule that can address a given grid objective. The objectives are primarily divided into two categories: maximizing benefits to utilities and maximizing benefits to EV owners.

#### 1) CONTROLLED EV CHARGING – MAXIMIZE UTILITY BENEFITS

Several articles have addressed the first objective, i.e. maximizing utility benefits. To do so, the utility general installs an aggregator and decides the EV charging rates and charging start times in accordance with the current load demand or electricity generation cost. For example, Clement-Nyns *et al.* [15] proposed a coordinated charging scheme to minimize system power losses. The authors proposed a dynamic programming algorithm to determine the EV charging profiles for each EV load under both deterministic and stochastic settings. An EV charging strategy is proposed in [39] to minimize the peak load demand. In [39], both local and global control strategies based on quadratic programming are proposed to control EV load charging based on the local load information and overall global load information, respectively. Additionally, Sortomme *et al.* [40] established the relationship between feeder losses, load factor, and load variance and formulated several optimal charging algorithms to minimize the impact of EVs on the distribution system. In [41], a real time EV charging control strategy is proposed to minimize the total electricity generation cost and associated grid energy losses. Furthermore, [42] proposes a demand response strategy to decrease the potential impacts of new load peaks created by EV integration, while minimizing the cost of upgrading the infrastructure. Also, in [43] the authors propose a different demand response (DR) strategy to accommodate EV charging while keeping the peak demand unchanged, thus maximizing the grid usage. In [44], authors aim to flatten the total load demand and formulated the optimal EV charging scheduling problem as a discrete optimization problem. In [45] and [46], the optimal charging control for EVs is achieved by optimizing the energy usage of the distributed EVs for V2G frequency regulation services. In [47] a near real-time algorithm is proposed that takes into account the dynamic nature of EV charging demand. EV charging is formulated as a receding horizon optimization problem while taking the transformer and line capacity limits, phase unbalance, and voltage stability constraints into account [47].

Similarly, [48] proposes a receding-horizon optimization approach to obtain an EV charging schedule that also includes future EV penetration in the algorithm. After including future EV deployments, the authors claim their approach results in a flatter demand profile and better demand-side management.

## 2) CONTROLLED EV CHARGING – MAXIMIZE CUSTOMER BENEFITS

In a TOU/real-time electricity market, EV charging rate and time can be controlled to follow the TOU/real-time rate structure while minimizing the charging cost for EV owners. Several researchers have proposed to adjust the EV charging rates and charging start times according to the real-time electricity market. For instance, [49] introduces a control model for EV charging according to real-time electricity price information. In [50], a quadratic programming technique is used to optimize the charging-discharging process such that the charging cost is minimized while maximizing the discharging profit. A heuristic method is proposed in [51] to control the EV charging rate and time in response to the TOU pricing schedule. A real time V2G control algorithm with price uncertainty is proposed in [52] to maximize the profit of each EV owner. The profit includes the payment received by the EV owners from the utility company for selling power minus the cost of purchasing power from the grid. In [53], both global and local optimal EV control strategies are proposed to minimize the total cost of electricity that EV owners pay for EV charging. Similarly, [54] solves the EV charging schedule problem by simultaneously maximizing the aggregator's profits and minimizing the EV owner's costs. In [54], a linear programming based optimal control strategy is proposed for the static charging scenario, and a heuristic is developed for the dynamic charging scenario. In [55], the customer benefits are maximized by optimizing the local grid level constraints. The proposed EV charging strategy aims to deliver the maximum amount of energy to the EV loads while maintaining the circuit parameters (substation demand and feeder voltages) within the specified limits [55].

There are a few limitations to the smart charging algorithms designed to directly control the EV charging. For example, by scheduling EV charging rate and time to maximize utility benefits, the proposed algorithms ignore customer inconvenience. Additionally, many utilities do not implement real-time prices for their residential customers. Therefore, the optimal EV charging methods that maximize EV customers' charging benefits are inapplicable. In this paper, we propose a controlled charging algorithm aiming to minimize voltage variations during EV charging thus resulting in a flat voltage profile at each EV customer location. The proposed algorithm takes EV charging start and end time as a user input thus avoiding customer inconvenience and obtains an optimal EV charging schedule while minimizing the impacts of EV charging on feeder voltages.

## III. ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING TECHNOLOGY

This section presents a review of the current electric vehicle (EV) charging technologies. A brief discussion of different EV technologies including the types of EV batteries is presented, followed by a discussion on EV charging standards and EV charging levels for both NA and EU distribution circuits.

### A. BACKGROUND OF ELECTRIC VEHICLE TECHNOLOGIES

Currently, three types of EV technologies are available on the market: hybrid electric vehicles (HEVs), plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs), and battery electric vehicles (BEVs) [2], [25]. HEVs contain an internal combustion engine that runs on conventional liquid fuel but is also supplemented by an electric motor and onboard battery. PHEVs contain both an internal combustion engine and an electric motor and battery. The battery can be charged in three different ways: by plugging in, by the combustion engine, or by regenerative braking. BEVs also referred to as all-electric vehicles do not contain internal combustion engine. Instead, they use batteries to store electricity and run on the stored electricity [23].

Since HEVs do not require a separate charging infrastructure, this paper considers only PHEVs and BEVs. For the scope of this paper, PHEVs and BEVs are collectively referred to as EVs. EV batteries are quite different from the batteries used in consumer electronic devices such as laptops and cell phones. They should be light in weight and small in size and able to handle up to a hundred kW of power and high energy capacity (up to tens of kWh). Currently, two major battery technologies are used in EVs [23], nickel metal hydride (NiMH) and lithium ion (Li-ion).

### B. ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STANDARDS

EV charging is either provided using a normal wall outlet or a dedicated charging circuit (e.g. wall box or charge pole). Usually EV charging is provided by a 120V (Level-1) or a 240V (Level-2) voltage supply (see Table 1) in North America and a 230V single-phase or 400V tri-phase in most other countries worldwide. The EV's charge couplers are described in IEC 62196 [58] and SAE J1772 [59]. For residential and public EV charging, the Type 1 coupler (SAE J1772 & IEC 62196 Type 1) is preferred in the U.S. and Japanese market. Type 2 (IEC 62196 Type 2) is preferred in the European market. Although the couplers are specified for up to 690 V AC and up to 250 A at 50 to 60 Hz, Level-1 (up to 16 A) and Level 2 (up to 32A) are most

**TABLE 1. EV charging levels and charger specifications (NA standards).**

Charging Level Type	Voltage Level	Power Level
Level-1	120 VAC	Up to 1.8 kW
Level-2	208-240 VAC	Up to 19.2 kW
Level-3 or DC Charging	480VDC	50 kW-150 kW



































